

EVEN though Wycombe Wanderers were pipped for the Rothman's Isthmian League title by champions Enfield on Saturday, the club can look back on another season of success that has become almost a tradition at Loakes Park.

Enfield's 3-1 win at Slough was enough to earn them the title by a point but for the second year running they have little financial reward to show for it. Wycombe, on the other hand, will top the £1,000 mark for the third year in succession.

The Blues will pocket £500 for finishing runners-up and can also expect a handsome chunk of the sportsmanship pool. Despite the pressures of chasing the championship, they had only one caution all season when Keith Mead was booked at Dulwich. This gives them the best disciplinary record in Division One and they will receive upwards of £400 from the pool. Added to that are their six £40 bonuses from Rothmans for three-clear-goal victories.

Although one can point to early season defeats at home to clubs like Hayes and Hitchin and also to Alan Phillips' controversial injury at Walthamstow as reasons for not winning the title, Wanderers must be extremely content to take second place.

Much of the credit should rest firmly on the shoulders of the caretaker manager John Reardon. When Ted Powell was dismissed in March, it was Reardon who was given the job of maintaining the club's interest in

the title race and he succeeded to the very last week of the season.

Under his guidance, Wycombe won eight, drew one and lost two of their 11 league games and Reardon's handling of the situation must enhance his chances of the manager's job next season. The club meets next week to discuss the situation.

RETAINED LIST

Players' contracts are currently being dealt with and a retained list should also be announced shortly.

The players themselves deserve special credit for producing a marvellous finish to the season on Saturday with their 3-1 win over Dulwich Hamlet. The manager paid his own tribute by saying: "I couldn't have asked more from the players. They were all tremendous and everyone enjoyed the run-in to the season."

"No one expected us to win at Tooting and Hitchin but win we did and if only we had produced those performances earlier in the season, we would have won the league."

The runners-up spot this year continues the club's marvellous run of success over the last eight years. Since 1969 they have won four Isthmian League championships, finished runners-up three times and once finished fourth. Their record

is consistency personified.

This season's success has been achieved with what many regard as a weaker squad of players than in previous years — which makes their position of runners-up even more impressive.

47 GOALS

Among the top performers on the field this season have been Ian Pearson, who took his tally to an amazing 47 goals in the Blues' 10-0 thrashing of Maltese Falcons on Monday evening. Alan Phillips enjoyed one of his best ever years while Keith Mead was 'Mr Consistency' alongside him. Alan spent two days in hospital this week for an operation on his nose, which was broken at Walthamstow.

There were encouraging signs for the future with the performances of younger players like Graham Mackenzie and Gavin Fraser but Wycombe's success would not have been achieved without a happy atmosphere amongst the players — something that has grown considerably over the last few months.

Two of them — Bob Davies and Mick Holifield — have been chosen to represent Middlesex Wanderers next week on their short tour of Holland. They will be staying in Amsterdam.

Wycombe's own tour this year is to Italy where they will be staying for one week. Matches have been arranged against Rimini (where they are based) and against Catollica. As usual the club are taking a number of guests on tour, including 'Free Press' sports editor Stuart Earp, who covered the Wanderers two Anglo-Italian Inter-League matches in Italy last season.